

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence School Committee

East Providence, City Hall, 145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

March 13, 2012

Mr. Tsonos called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. School Committee Members present: Luisa Abatecola, Stephen Furtado, Ryan Tellier, Chrissy Rossi and Charles Tsonos. Also present: Mr. Edward M. Daft, Interim Superintendent, Mr. Robert Silva, Esq. and Andrew Thomas, Esq.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag & Moment of Silence were observed.

Student/Teacher Recognition – Mr. Daft introduced Ms. Jennifer Cahoon, High School Art Department Chair, in recognition of Youth Art Month which is celebrated annually in March. Ms. Cahoon, introduced several young artists who were commended for their accomplishments; student artwork will be displayed at various locations.

Student Liaison – Andrew Butler presented a report on high school events and activities.

Report on City of East Providence Budget Commission –Mr. Daft reported that he and the Finance Director have attended weekly meetings and that progress is being made. Chairman of the Budget

Commission, Mr. O’Keefe, has requested that departments submit lists concerning what their departments can live with. Points made by Mr. O’Keefe include consolidation; advertising Human Resources position; enhancement of buying power; growing the tax base, operating expenditure control. Budget Commission Chairman has the best decisions at heart; all meetings are open to the public.

In response to a question from Mr. Furtado regarding improved cash flow, Mr. Daft explained that the five year plan will be more difficult to achieve; all departments are now looking at more efficiency; eventually, East Providence could be used as a model.

Mrs. Rossi read her statement regarding what the Budget Commission has meant to East Providence School Department and asked that a copy be placed on record. Mrs. Rossi stated that in accordance with a RI General Law, East Providence qualified for Budget Commission oversight while operating in a deficit and experiencing a drop in bond rating. In her opinion the law has been disruptive to the School Department and completely disregards the elected School Committee.

The Budget Commission Chairman, Mr. O’Keefe, has been recognized for his financial acumen and since his arrival, the city has been doing better. Concerns are a \$20 million city side unfunded pension liability; (OPEB) Other Post Employment Benefits are also a concern and need to be addressed as soon as possible. The Budget Commission meetings are listed on the city website and meetings are open to the public. The Chairman, Mr. O’Keefe, can be contacted by

emails with any questions.

Mr. Tsonos believed that the School Department will finally be treated fairly; better than past experiences with most members of the City Council.

Public Comment I - None

Report: Interim Superintendent's Report

Building Committee Report – Mr. Daft reported on discussions at the March 6, 2012 meeting as follows:

Life safety project completion update – first portion of the district-wide repairs project was completed as scheduled at end of November 2011; final cost to date on first phase is \$5.8 million. The vast majority of the additional work was comprised of electrical code deficiencies that had to be remedied in order to proceed with the original project work.

Energy Upgrades Project Status – Johnson Controls continues to make steady progress on list of items involved in the energy upgrades scope; Lighting upgrades have been completed in all of the schools; energy conservation work will continue and is still on track to be completed by end of June 2012.

CTC Project Update – New cosmetology room and kitchen are open and students are using these spaces. RIDE has agreed that remaining funds from the original \$1.1 million can be used for additional improvements at the CTC after they review plans which have been submitted by the architect, SMMA. Work will move ahead

once the approval is received.

Phase 2 Planning for district wide repairs – Approval to move forward with planning was received in February and efforts are underway to expedite the work. RI Analytical is working on a tight time table to develop and submit a plan to RI Department of Health in order to have an approved abatement plan for work over the summer at the high school. Timetable - SMMA will be submitting design development plans to RIDE for review and approval and then put out to bid prior to the middle of May in order for work to begin at the end of June.

In response to a question from Mr. Furtado regarding Phase II fund/bonds, Mary King stated that she did not anticipate any issues; she attended two meetings; the Commission voted to accept our application; we fully expect approval; funds available in May;

Finance Report – Mary King, Finance Director stated that revenues were not much different from last year; we have received state aid; expenditures are on track; there were a couple of early pays, but we have had limited spending.

Personnel Report on Retirements/Resignations/Leaves of Absence – Mary King, Finance Director, presented the personnel items:

RETIREMENTS (All Effective End of 2011/2012 School Year)

Jane Pumple (23 years) Grade 3 Teacher-Waddington

Elizabeth Condinho (24 years) Teacher Assistant-MMS

Robert Tewksbury (30 years) Robotics Teacher-MMS

Elizabeth Patnaude (22 years) School Nurse-Francis

Alice Fontes (22 years) Secretary-Silver Spring Elementary School

RESIGNATIONS

**Deana Dufficy Speech/Language Pathologist-Effective
02/23/2012-Following LOA**

David White 180-Day Custodian-Effective 10/31/2011

**Christopher Kennedy Girls Softball Coach-MMS; Contingent on
appointment to**

JV Baseball Coach -EPHS

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**Kathleen Caffrey Grade 3 Teacher-Francis-Effective 2012-2013
School Year**

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

**Tarah Daigneault Special Education Teacher-HENN-Effective
05/29/2012-End of School Year**

**On behalf of the School Committee, Mr. Tsonos thanked the retirees
for their service.**

Consent Agenda

**Approval of Minutes – A motion was made by Mr. Tellier to approve
the minutes of the meetings held on December 13, 2011, January 10,**

2012, January 24, 2012, and February 14, 2012, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Action Items

**Personnel Appointments and Layoffs – Presented by Mary King,
Finance Director:**

APPOINTMENTS

Chris Kennedy -Assistant Baseball Coach-EPHS

Nicholas Shattuck-Girls Lacrosse Coach-EPHS

Angelo Pizzi-Boys Lacrosse Coach-EPHS

Katie Kenahan-Girls Softball Coach-RMS

Richard Small-Boys Outdoor Track Coach-RMS

Shane Messier-Girls Softball Coach-MMS

Kathy Dias-Boys Head Tennis Coach-EPHS

(Approved by Budget Commission)

**Contract Non-Renewals (Layoffs - Changes in student programs for
the 2012-2013 school year)**

TEACHER ASSISTANTS

**Colleen Kinder Francis Elementary School - Effective End of
2011/2012 School Year**

Niurka Ferreira EPHS Effective End of 2011/2012 School Year

Leann Ayotte EPHS Effective End of 2011/2012 School Year

Motion to approve appointments and layoffs by Mr. Tellier, seconded

by Mr. Furtado. Vote 5-0.

Requisitions – Bill List

Warrant #

1190	3/5/12	\$	269,397.73
1191	3/5/12	\$	46,573.54
1192	3/5/12	\$	758,703.58
1193	3/6/12	\$	255,865.48
1194	3/7/12	\$	16,870.49
1195	3/7/12	\$	363,115.68
1196	3/7/12	\$	36,499.84

Motion to approve by Mr. Tellier, seconded by Mr. Furtado. Vote 5-0.

In response to a question from Mr. Tsonos if current; Ms. King explained that we are staying within the amount of cash flow from the city with one special education vendor still out there.

Approval of Advertising Request by Rumford Dental Inc. – Motion by Mrs. Rossi to approve, seconded by Mr. Tellier. Discussion regarding costs of ads; Mr. Tsonos asked for accounting of advertising funds collected to date; Mary King can make that information available. Vote 5-0.

School Committee Meeting Schedule – A motion was made by Mrs. Abatecola to revert back to one School Committee meeting per month

(second Tuesday of the month) since the School Committee is acting in an advisory role only while under Budget Commission oversight. A second meeting can be scheduled if necessary. Motion seconded by Mr. Furtado. Vote 5-0. The posting of 2012 monthly meeting dates will be revised and re-posted on school website.

Mr. Tsonos requested that the Clerk, Mr. Furtado, read a resolution concerning Consolidation of School Districts/Superintendents. Mr. Tsonos wished to go on record; since he thought the time was now in light of consolidation in the city of East Providence which has been going well; he requested that the Governor and General Assembly consider consolidation at a higher level promoting reorganization throughout the state. Mr. Tellier thought it would be hard to consolidate 37 school districts which are vastly different; regionalizing schools would take away from individual districts; he thought it was important that each city or town maintain its own individuality since there are all different ways to educate children; this would be a long shot at best. Mr. Tsonos stated that the General Assembly should research consolidation at a higher level; he believes it is possible. Mr. Furtado noted that down the road there has to be consolidation; it has been done in other parts of the country and he thinks this is going in the right direction. Mrs. Abatecola asked for clarification that the resolution is to investigate and research consolidation. A motion was made by Mrs. Abatecola, seconded by Mrs. Rossi. Roll call vote: Mrs. Abatecola, aye; Mr. Furtado, aye; Mrs. Rossi, aye; Mr. Tsonos voted aye; Mr. Tellier voted

nay.

Vote 4-1 to approve forwarding the resolution.

New Business

Energy Savings – Connex, LLC – A motion was made by Mrs. Rossi to withdraw this item from the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Abatecola.

Discussion: Mrs. Rossi was informed by the City Manager that the city will request proposals for energy savings and interested parties should submit their proposals to the city under the conditions of the RFP process. Vote 5-0.

Physical Fitness - Mr. Tsonos provided information regarding the benefits of the City's Recreation Center; membership is \$50 per year and supports the city; he encouraged all to participate in those programs.

Handicapped Accessible Parking - Mr. Tsonos stated that he was approached regarding insufficient parking spaces for handicapped individuals; this will be addressed at a later date.

Public Comment II - None

Announcements - Mrs. Rossi advised that a new traffic pattern has been developed and implemented at Waddington School which alleviates problems which have occurred when students are being dropped off and picked up at that school.

Mr. Daft reported that the School Department has been awarded a \$20,000 grant for an ELA project and teacher training.

Mr. Tsonos addressed the Mayor's recent statement regarding the amount of money spent on bus transportation for East Providence students; he thought that the remarks were unfair and the Mayor should take time to find out about mandates within the School Department. Everyone should be working together; the School Committee must obey various state mandates and if there are problems with certain mandates, the General Assembly is the body to address those issues. Mr. Furtado was not sure where the figures were coming from; he also disputed the numbers cited by the Mayor.

A motion was made by Mr. Furtado that the Committee convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing: Personnel - R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (1)]; Collective Bargaining R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2); and Litigation/Pending Litigation -R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a) (2, seconded by Mr. Tellier.

Vote 5-0.

A motion was made by Mr. Furtado to return to public session and to seal the minutes, seconded by Mr. Tellier. No votes were taken in Executive Session.

A motion was made Mr. Furtado to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Tellier.

Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Stephen Furtado, Clerk of the Committee